REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 17, 2010. Claims 17 to 22 are pending in the application, of which Claims 17, 19, 21 and 22 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination is respectfully requested.

Claims 17 to 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,956,665 (Miyahara) further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,348,971 (Owa). Claims 18 to 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyahara, Owa and further in view of U.S. Pub. 2002/0093680 (Tanaka). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

The present claims concern the management of a print job that may or may not require color printing. In one aspect of the claims, a plurality of print pages ordered by a print order are distributed to a plurality of print devices and printed by the plurality of print devices when the print order indicates monochrome printing. However, a plurality of print pages ordered by a print order are transmitted to a single color print device and printed by the single color print device when the print order indicates color printing.

By virtue of this feature, it is ordinarily possible to remove a difference of tint between color pages that is sometimes caused by printing the color pages of a single print job using a plurality of different color print devices. In a printing system in accordance with the present claims, all of the color pages are sent to a single color print device when color printing is ordered. However, in order to shorten the print time of a monochrome by distributing the pages to a plurality of different print devices and printing

the pages by the plurality of different print devices in parallel when monochrome printing is ordered.

Turning to specific claim language, independent Claim 17 is directed to a print system comprising a print control apparatus and a plurality of print devices, wherein the print control apparatus and the plurality of print devices are connected with each other. The print control apparatus includes: an acquiring unit configured to acquire in a print order, the print order including information indicating color printing or monochrome printing and information designating a type of print device; a judging unit configured to judge whether or not the print order indicates color printing or monochrome printing; and an assigning unit configured to distribute a plurality of print pages ordered by the print order to a plurality of print devices of the type designated in the print order so as to print the plurality print pages in parallel by the plurality of print device, , when the plurality of print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the judging unit judges that the print order indicates monochrome printing, and to transmit a plurality of print pages ordered by the print order to a single color print device of a plurality of color print devices of the type, designated in the print order so as to print the plurality of print pages by only the single color print device, when the plurality of color print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the judging unit judges that the print order indicates color printing, and each of the plurality of print devices comprising: a print processing unit configured to perform print processing for any print pages distributed or transmitted by the assigning unit of the print control apparatus.

Applicants submit that the cited references, namely Miyahara and Owa, whether considered alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of

the present claims. In particular, the cited references fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of acquiring from a print order information indicating color printing or monochrome printing and information designating a type of print device and distributing a plurality of print-pages ordered by the print order to a plurality of print devices of the type designated in the print order so as to print the plurality print pages in parallel by the plurality of print device,-when the plurality of print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the print order indicates monochrome printing, and transmitting a plurality of print-pages ordered by the print order to a single color print device of a plurality of color print devices of the type designated in the print order so as to print the plurality of print pages by only the single color print device,-when the plurality of color print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the print order indicates color printing.

In contrast to the present claims, Miyahara discloses that when Black and White (BW) images and color images coexist and an image print system is based on a BW digital copying machine, the color page data is first transmitted to a color copying machine 105 and then printed by the color copying machine 105. Then, the printed color pages are carried by a user to an inserter 222 of the BW digital copying machine 106. The BW image data is then transmitted to the BW digital copying machine 106 and printed by the BW digital copying machine 106 while inserting the printed color pages from the inserter 222 in instructed positions between the BW pages printed by the BW digital copying machine 106, in correspondence with a predetermined sequence of color and BW print pages. (See Miyahara Fig. 4, and column 5, line 47 to column 6, line 26).

In addition, Miyahara discloses that, when BW images and color images coexist and the image print system is based on a color copying machine, the BW image data is transmitted to the BW digital copying machine 106 and then printed by the BW digital copying machine 106. Then, the printed BW pages are carried by a user to an inserter 222 or a manual sheet feeder 227 of the color copying machine 105. The color image data is then transmitted to the color copying machine 105 and printed by the color copying machine 105 while inserting the printed BW pages from the inserter 222 or the manual sheet feeder 227 in instructed positions between the color pages printed by the color copying machine 105, in correspondence with a predetermined sequence of color and BW print pages.

That is, Miyahara merely discloses that color print pages are printed by a color print machine, BW print pages are printed by a BW print machine, and color and BW print pages that coexist in a print job are printed by inserting printed color pages between printing BW pages at the BW print machine or by inserting printed monochrome pages between printing color pages at the color print machine. While Miyahara may suggest plural sets of the BW print machines and the color print machines, Miyahara fails to disclose or suggest distributing a plurality of print-pages ordered by the print order to a plurality of print devices of the type designated in the print order so as to print the plurality print pages in parallel by the plurality of print device,-when the plurality of print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the print order indicates monochrome printing, and transmitting a plurality of print-pages ordered by the print order to a single color print device of a plurality of color print devices of the type designated in the print order so as to print the plurality of print pages by only the single color print

device,-when the plurality of color print devices in the type designated in the print order exist in the print system and the print order indicates color printing.

In the Office Action, it is acknowledged that Miyahara fails to disclose determining whether to use a plurality of print devices or to use a single color print device in accordance with a determination of whether or not the print order indicates color printing. However, the Office Action states in page 4 that Owa discloses such a feature.

Applicants submit that Owa discloses that every print page can be assigned to an optimum printer by selecting a printer that satisfies various conditions from a plurality of printers based on print-attribute information of each print page. Therefore, as pointed out in page 4, lines 15 and 16 of the Office Action, if a printer suitable for color printing is only one in the system, all color pages are assigned to the single printer. However, Owa only suggests that the number of printers assigned to print the color pages corresponds to the number of suitable color printers in the system, but fails to disclose or suggestion that only a single color print printer is selected from a plurality of suitable color printers in the system to print the color pages. Therefore, Owa also fails to disclose or suggest that a plurality of print pages ordered by a print order are distributed to a plurality of print devices and printed by the plurality of print devices when the print order indicates monochrome printing, while a plurality of print pages ordered by a print order are transmitted to a single color print device and printed by the single color print device when the print order indicates color printing.

In light of the deficiencies of the cited references as discussed above, Applicants submit independent Claim 17 is in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

Independent Claims 19, 21, and 22 are directed to an apparatus, a method and a computer-readable storage medium, respectively, substantially in accordance with the system of Claim 17. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claims 19, 21, and 22 are also in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted

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